

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PBOR, EWWT, TZ, KE
SUBJECT: KENYA-TANZANIAN RELATIONS - RELEASE OF LAKE VESSELS

REF: NAIROBI 1480 (NOTAL)

1. TANZANIA PRESS 23 MAY REPORTED THAT KENYA HAD AGREED
RELEASE TO TANZANIA THREE FORMER EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY SHIPS
ON LAKE VICTORIA DETAINED IN KENYAN PORT OF KISUMU SINCE 1975.
RELEASE OF LAKE VESSELS WAS ONE OF NINE CONDITIONS CONTAINED
IN AGREEMENT REACHED IN MOMBASA LAST DECEMBER FOR STEPS TO
IMPROVED TANZANIA-KENYA RELATIONS. TANZANIAN DELEGATION HAS
ALREADY LEFT FOR KISUMU TO MAKE PRELIMINARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR
DELIVERY OF THE THREE SHIPS TO MWANZA.

2. NEGOTIATIONS EARLIER THIS YEAR ON RETURN OF VESSELS BROKE
DOWN REPORTEDLY WHEN KENYA INTRODUCED ADDITIONAL CONDITIONS
WHICH WERE UNACCEPTABLE TO TANZANIA. ACCORDING MEDIA, KENYA

HAS NOW INDICATED IN WRITING IT PREPARED IMPLEMENT "TO THE
LETTER" THIS POINT OF MOMBASA AGREEMENT.

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3. IN RECENT DISCUSSION, MEMBER OF TANGOV TRANSPORT TEAM TO
KISUMU TOLD EMBOFF THAT WORLD BANK-SPONSORED MEDIATOR FOR
EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC) ASSETS AND LIABILITIES HAD
CONVINCED KENYA TO RELEASE VESSELS ON RATIONALE THAT KENYA WITH
ONE LAKE PORT COULD NOT USE THEM WHILE TANZANIA HAD GREAT NEED
FOR THEIR SERVICES. REPORTEDLY, "VESSELS HAD BECOME ACUTE

EMBARRASSMENT FOR KENYA" AND TEST IN MEDIATOR'S VIEW OF KENYAN GOOD WILL IN RESOLVING EAC DISSOLUTION. TEAM MEMBER ADDED IT WOULD BE SOME TIME BEFORE LAKE SERVICE RESUMED AS REPAIRS ARE NEEDED AND PILOTS MUST BE RECRUITED FROM ABROAD.

4. COMMENT: TANZANIA HAS LONG CITED GROUNDING OF LAKE VESSELS AS SYMBOL OF KENYAN DUPLICITY AND ONE OF REASONS FOR CLOSING COMMON LAND BORDER IN FEBRUARY 1977. RESOLUTION OF LAKE VESSELS ISSUE SHOULD LEAD TO RELEASE OF KENYAN VEHICLES AND AIRCRAFT DETAINED IN TANZANIA. NEGOTIATION ON OTHER ISSUES, SUCH AS TRADE, AIR, TRANSIT OF ZAMBIAN GOODS, COULD FOLLOW.

5. TANZANIAN LEADERS APPEAR UNDECIDED ON WHAT THE NATURE OF TANZANIA-KENYA RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE. THEY RECALL THAT PREVIOUS TRADE AND TOURISM ARRANGEMENTS WORKED IN KENYA'S FAVOR. MORE IMPORTANTLY, THEY CONTINUE HIGHLIGHT IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES. TANZANIANS ARE PROBABLY NOT EAGER TO REOPEN THE BORDER BECAUSE THEY PERCEIVE ITS CLOSURE AS BOTH ADDING TO DIFFICULTIES FOR KENYAN REGIME AND STRENGTHENING TANZANIA'S SELF-RELIANCE.

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